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## From the Reference Desk

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# From the Reference Desk

## Reference Reviews

Column Editor: **Tom Gilson** (College of Charleston) (gilson@cofc.edu)

**Wong, Mary M., ed.**  
*1995 National Directory of Bereavement Support Groups and Services.*  
Forest Hills, NY: ADM, 1995. pap. \$24.95  
(ISBN 0-9645608-9-5)

Reviewed by **Tom Gilson**

This book is a labor of love. Confronting the grief from the murder of her step-daughter, editor **Mary Wong**, found herself in a New York City library searching for information to help her cope. In particular, she was trying to locate a list of possible support groups. The librarian recommended a few reference titles, but, as Mary put it, "looking through those thousand-page books was exhausting." And to make matters worse, she was unable to find what she was looking for. Frustrated, she headed for the stacks and after hours of searching through books on death and dying, she located the address and telephone number of a local homicide support group.

That day in the library started an eleven-year involvement organizing support groups and helping other bereaved parents and family members deal with their grief. But Mrs. Wong noticed that a constant problem kept recurring, bereaved people had difficulty in connecting with others who had experienced similar tragedies.

The *1995 National Directory of Bereavement Support Groups and Services* is Mary Wong's response to that problem. However, this directory provides more than a listing of addresses. A third of the book contains reprinted articles and personal accounts dealing with types of bereavement like the death of an infant, being widowed and dealing with suicide, as well as issues

like explaining death to a child, organ

and tissue donation, and getting through the holidays. In addition, Mrs. Wong includes a month-by-month list of conferences and seminars held throughout the country and a bibliography of recommended books arranged by topic areas.

But, the main portion of the *1995 Directory of Bereavement Support Groups and Services* is devoted to listing over 1000 community support groups and national organizations. This section of the *Directory* is divided by type of bereavement, listing relevant national organizations, and then local organizations, by state. Each entry includes the address, telephone number, fax number (when available), contact person, year established, type of group (open or closed), area and clientele served, fees/dues and a brief but informative description.

The *1995 National Directory of Bereavement Support Groups and Services* fills an obvious need. My only reservation is the lack of comprehensiveness. Like most librarians, when it comes to information, I want it all. This directory provides a wealth of information but there are omissions. (Our local AIDS Support group, as well as Hospice of Charleston were not included.) In a telephone conversation with Mrs. Wong I learned that she was uncomfortable including information about support groups which did not respond to her inquiries, and that this being a self-publishing effort, she did not have the resources to make as many follow up telephone calls as she would have liked. Hopefully, this directory will find enough of an audience to prompt more interest among bereavement groups in being included, and the resources to make expanding the listings feasible for a second edition. Mrs. Wong might also consider expanding the bibliography to include relevant magazine and journal articles.

Overall, Mary Wong is to be congratulated for seeing the need and taking the initiative to create this valuable resource. This type of self-publishing in reference is refreshing and we can only hope we see more of it.

The *1995 National Directory of Bereavement Support Groups and Services* can be ordered from ADM Publishing, P.O. Box 751155, Forest Hills, NY 11375-8755. The price is \$24.95 plus \$3.00 shipping and handling.

## *IFB Abstracts*

<http://www.library.upenn.edu:80/ifba>

Reviewed by **Tom Gilson**

The emergence of the World Wide Web is enabling the Internet to start fulfilling its promise. Reference librarians are and should be in the forefront of exploring the Web's potential for providing hardcore information for their patrons. But that is only half of the story. There are also opportunities for "value added" contributions like online bibliographies, web guides, and "virtual reference desks" which can, and are, being added to library homepages every day. However, even more exciting is a whole new world of "Web publishing" which is opening up to reference librarians.

*IFB Abstracts* is a librarian-produced homepage which provides a good example of what is possible. Intended for academic librarians, *IFB Abstracts* offers English-language abstracts of reference reviews which have appeared in the German quarterly *Informationsmittel für Bibliotheken*. Edited by **Klaus Schreiber**, *Informationsmittel für Bibliotheken* reviews reference materials in "all media and all subjects."

By abstracting this German publication, *IFB Abstracts* provides access to difficult to find reviews of European-language reference works. All of the abstractors are either American or British librarians and the two editors, **Heidi Hutchinson** (University of California at Riverside) and **Stephen Lehmann** (University of Pennsylvania) are also librarians.

*IFB Abstracts* is fairly well constructed and easy to use. It is divided into three major subpages; an introduction, the 1995 menu and a 1994 backfile. Given that the purpose of *IFB Abstracts* is to assist librarians in evaluating and selecting European language reference materials, abstracts of English language materials are not included. The majority of sources are in German but other European languages are represented. A direct link is also provided to the original German publication so that if you read German you can read the full reviews. According to editor, **Stephen Lehmann**, these reviews are quite scholarly and well worth the effort.

The abstracts are arranged using a

*continued on page 96*





# Profiles Encouraged:

## Norman Desmarais



**Experience:** Acquisitions Librarian at Providence College in Providence, R.I. since 1984. In addition to overseeing acquisitions, he assists at the reference desk

and manages the library's CD-ROM network. He also teaches an occasional course in Management Information Systems in the college's MBA program. Prior to coming to Providence, he headed the Order & Cataloging Division at Catholic University of America and served as Librarian at St. Mary's Seminary & University in Baltimore, MD 21210.

**Education:** Master of Library Science from Simmons College in 1977, Master of Business Administration from Providence College in 1990, M.A. and B.A. from the Gregorian University in Rome, Italy in 1972 and 1969 respectively.

**Professional Activities:** Editor-in-Chief, *CD-ROM Librarian*, 1990-1993; Senior Editor, *CD-ROM World*, 1993-1994; Columnist, *CD-ROM Professional*, 1994-; Columnist, *Against the Grain*, 1994-; Advisory editor, *Journal of Religious & Theological Information*, 1990-; Contributing editor, *Optical Information Systems*, 1987-1989. American Library Association/ Library and Information Technology Association; Rhode Island Library Association/ feature editor, *RILA Bulletin* Special Libraries Association/ Rhode Island Chapter, 1988-.

**Family:** Wife and two teen-aged daughters.


**Pastimes:** Ice skating, skiing, reviewing CD-ROMs, reading, writing. Norm has written several books and numerous articles for a variety of journals. After writing about CD-ROM for the past 10 years, he is now working on developing one. This past year, he has been on sabbatical researching the American Revolution. He has traveled to state and national historic parks and to reenactments of historic events of the period as part of this project. He looks forward to promotion to full professor in the Spring.

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classification scheme based on Eugene Sheehy's *Guide to Reference Books*. Accessing the abstracts is done by clicking the classification number. The 1995 menu has a listing of each abstracted title directly under the classification number, in effect providing a table of contents which makes browsing easier. Unfortunately, the 1994 backfile does not provide this type of table of contents so you have to click each classification number to see which sources have been included. This can be tedious and cumbersome. As *IFB Abstracts* grows, some way of accessing the total contents needs to be developed. As it stands now, browsing or using the Netscape "Find" function to search by keyword on each subpage, are the only options. In the future an index would be very helpful.

The abstracts are brief, but well-written, being both descriptive and evaluative. Related reference titles are referred to when appropriate. Basic bibliographic information is provided including both the English and European language titles, ISBN and the price, in the original currency. Each abstract

is initialed, identifying the abstractor and original reviewer with a list of abstractors and reviewers available from the Introduction page. A minor point, but an improvement on this would be to allow linkage to the abstractor/reviewer lists directly from the abstract pages. In fact, one could argue that more direct linkages could be provided throughout the homepage. But, editor Lehmann points out, homepage construction is very labor-intensive, and although desirable, such multiple linkages are not always feasible given time limitations.

*IFB Abstracts* is providing a very valuable service to collection development and reference librarians. It provides ready access to reviews of European-language reference works difficult to find elsewhere. The editors and abstractors have reason to be proud. They saw an important need not being met anywhere else, and acted to fill it. At the same time, they have highlighted the "Web" as an outlet for librarian expertise and creativity. The possibilities of librarian self-publishing on the Web opens up a new dynamic for our profession and one that bears watching. This column welcomes reader response on this issue. 

## Rumors from page 16

began working as Senior Acquisitions Clerk in 1987 completed a two-year program at the **Muscular Therapy Institute** in Cambridge, MA in July, 1995. She has also been certified by the National Certification in Therapeutic Massage and Body Work. Several employees of the library and the college volunteered as "practice bodies" during her studies. Rose will continue to work in the Acquisitions Department and practice her new skills on her own time. After her graduation, she offered library staff mini-massages one day after work hours. The library director is considering employing her new skills during periods of particular stress, such as at exam times.

**Jack Montgomery** (U. of Missouri, Columbia) brings some great news. He says that both the **Charleston Conference** and **ATG** were very favorably mentioned not once or twice but FOUR times at the recent AALL meeting in Pittsburgh. Wow! Thanks, Jack! And speaking of Jack, read his Biz of Acq. about government information, in this issue, p 68.

Sorry I couldn't attend **Long Island University's Palmer School of Library & Information Science** summer publishing institute (August 14-18). **Patricia Glass Schuman** (President of Neal-Schuman Publishers, and ex-president of ALA) and **GraceAnne DeCandido** of the H.W. Wilson Company and *Wilson Library Bulletin* were

the instructors in this intensive one-week format designed to give a basic understanding of the publishing process and the relationships between librarians and publishers. If, like me, you want to know more about it, contact Rosemary Chu, Academic Counselor <rosechu@aurora.liunet.edu>.

**Gary Herald** (Ambassador) has just returned from a two-day trip to San Francisco. He writes that the fabulous **David Ungar** is Ambassador's Vice President and Director for International Marketing. (I guess I didn't include this piece of info in the last issue, whups!). With this issue, we welcome **Philip Hallman** as the new editor of *Media Minder*. See this issue, page 92. Welcome, Philip!

Okay, I confess, I didn't go to **ALA Annual** in Chicago this year. I had a chance to see my son and I took the latter rather than the former. I understand, though, that this was one exciting and hugely attended meeting (24,000 plus). **ATG** was ably represented by **Lyman Newlin**, and **Garance, Inc.'s** (publishers of the *Librarians Yellow Pages*), **Raissa Fomerand**, **Leslie Levine** and **Allison Lehr**. Thank you all for letting me loaf. 